

# VNG strike teams boost COVID-19 testing capacity

Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airman are helping increase Virginia’s COVID-19 testing capacity at long-term care facilities with point prevalence sampling teams. The PPS teams began testing missions April 29, 2020, and have collected more than 2,700 patient samples for testing.

Led by the Richmond-based 34th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High-Yield Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package, PPS “strike teams” are being deployed to long-term care facilities identified by the state.

Each strike team is comprised of four PPS teams, each with three personnel, who receive rigorous medical training on proper sample taking, sample handling and sanitation. Those teams train to go through a residential long-term care facility room by room to conduct a large number of tests quickly and safely.

Those PPS teams are supported by a command and control element and a decontamination element, a part of the process every bit as important as the actual sample taking. All components of the strike teams undergo training conducted by the 34th CERFP, making sure every member of each team is ready.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2020/05/07/15019/>



Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen collect samples for COVID-19 testing of staff members at a long-term care facility May 5, 2020, in the Richmond, Virginia area.

**Virginia National Guard News Headlines**

**Gallagher succeeds Flora as Assistant Adjutant General – Army**  
Brig. Gen. K. Weedon Gallagher has succeeded Brig. Gen. Lapthe C. Flora as the Virginia National Guard Assistant Adjutant General – Army, according to an announcement made April 14, 2020.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2020/05/01/15001/>

**VNG recognizes military spouses for Military Spouse Appreciation Day**  
National Guard military spouses are honored and appreciated throughout the year, but they receive a special recognition on National Military Spouse Appreciation Day, which is celebrated the Friday before Mother’s Day. This year it will be observed Friday, May 8.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2020/05/06/15025/>

**VNG honors youngest members during Month of the Military Child**  
April was Month of the Military Child, a month set aside to recognize the support, courage, and sacrifice military children give through their involuntary service within our military family.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2020/05/05/15004/>

**#StayHome & COVID-19: Reflections from VNG’s Director of Psychological Health**  
It’s been roughly six weeks since the outside closed and we were encouraged to #StayHome in hopes these efforts would slow the spread of COVID-19. Home is where we were the safest and that is where we were told to stay.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2020/05/06/15036/>

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For information about joining the Virginia Army National Guard, the Virginia Air National Guard or Virginia Defense Force, visit the appropriate link below:

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# Adjutant General of Virginia COVID-19 Update #5

Virginia National Guard Team:

I joined Governor Ralph Northam and the Virginia Emergency Support Team during the COVID-19 press brief May 6, 2020, to provide an update on the Virginia National Guard support to the statewide response, and these are remarks I presented.

Today, we have approximately 570 personnel actively working or ready to support Virginia's COVID response. Our mission is to provide additional capabilities and expand capacity for lead agencies like the Virginia Department of Health and Virginia Department of Emergency Management who establish the priorities and assign the localities where we work.

Our top priority is providing additional capacity for COVID test sample collection and mask fit testing at long term care and correctional facilities which are some of our most vulnerable population. We also have personnel transporting testing kits at different locations across the state as well as providing material handling support, commodity distribution and planning.

When the Governor declared a state of emergency we immediately began assisting with operations, logistics and medical planning in multiple VDEM regions across the state, and those planning efforts continue. So far, our personnel have performed more than 22,000 hours of planning augmentation.

About 100 VNG Soldiers and Airmen with extensive experience with the proper employment of PPE and operations involving hazardous materials and health protection protocols received training from VDH and are supporting COVID sample collection and N-95 respirator mask fit testing.

At multiple locations across the state, we collected samples from more than 2,700 people using provided kits, conducted mask fit tests for nearly 450 staff members at long term care facilities and delivered more than 730 sample collection kits. This week we have personnel supporting testing in the Central and Northern Virginia areas and we will deploy personnel to support the Eastern Shore Health District in conducting drive-through testing.

While supporting the testing effort is our top priority, we have personnel on duty and helping in a number of other ways.

Our Soldiers are supporting food bank operations by assisting with preparing food boxes in the warehouses, as well as helping with food distribution in Fredericksburg and Roanoke / New River Valley areas. We have assisted with the distribution of approximately 50,000 pounds of food in our local communities.

Across the seven VDEM regions, we have personnel assisting with material handling operations to get much-needed supply packages on trucks for delivery. Guard personnel have handled more than 500 pallets and assisted with the distribution of more than 200,000 N-95 masks, 150,000 surgical masks, 69,000 pairs of surgical gloves and 720 bottles of hand sanitizer.

All of these missions are a result of our ongoing coordination with VDEM and our operations are part of the coordinated multi-agency state team.

As is the case in everything we do, we wouldn't be able to conduct our missions without the support of our families,



**Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 229th Brigade Engineer Battalion assist with logistics and food distribution April 23, 2020, at the Fredericksburg Regional Food Bank in Fredericksburg, Virginia.**

employers and communities. With Military Spouse Appreciation Day coming up on Friday, it is important to recognize how much we rely on our loved ones. Most of our personnel on duty right now have full-time jobs other than the National Guard, and our employers are great patriots for their patience, flexibility and unwavering commitment. Now more than ever we all need to come together and work as a team, and I thank them all for the important contributions they are making.

We will continue to work with localities and our state agency partners supporting all efforts to move Virginia forward.

Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams,  
28th Adjutant General of Virginia

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2020/05/06/15041/>

## MORE ON THE WEB

### Photos: Flora promoted to major general

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/albums/72157714142592698>

### Photo Collection: VNG COVID-19 Support

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/collections/72157714198338108/>

### Virginia National Guard COVID-19 Resources

<https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/covid-19/>

### VNG COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

<https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2020/03/25/14836/>



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